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THE WORLD'S EVANGELIZATION

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LAYMEN'S MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

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THE OBLIGATION OF THE CHURCH OF THIS GENERATION

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The World's Evangelization—The Obligation of the Church of This Generation.

THERE is a large and increasing number of Christians who believe not only that it is the duty of the Church to evangelize the world in this generation, but also that it is possible to accomplish the task. What is meant by the evangelization of the world in this generation? It means to give every person an adequate opportunity to know Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. We do not mean the conversion of the world in this generation. We do not imply a hasty or superficial preaching of the gospel. We do not use the expression as a prophecy. It calls attention to what may and ought to be done, not necessarily to what is actually going to occur. We do not minimize the importance of any method of missionary work which has been and is being used by the Spirit of God. We rather add emphasis to all the regular forms of missionary work, such as educational, medical, literary, and evangelistic. As Dr. Dennis says: "The evan-

gelistic method must not be regarded as monopolizing the evangelistic aim, which should itself pervade all the other methods." The evangelization of the world in this generation should not be regarded as an end in itself. The Church will not have fulfilled her task when the gospel has been preached to all men. Such evangelization must be followed by baptism of the converts, by their organization into churches, by building them up in knowledge, faith, and character, and by training them for service. The great objective should be always kept in mind, namely, the planting and developing in all non-Christian lands of self-supporting, self-directing, and self-propagating churches.

It is the obligation of the Church to evangelize the world in this generation. It is our duty because all men need Christ. The Scriptures clearly teach that if men are to be saved they must be saved through Christ. The burning question then is, Shall hundreds of millions of men now living, who need Christ, and who are capable of receiving help from Him, pass away without having even the opportunity to know Him? To have a knowledge of Christ is to incur a responsibility to every man who has not. We are trustees of the Gospel, and in no sense sole proprietors. What a crime against mankind to keep a knowledge of the mission of Christ from two-thirds of the human race! It is our duty to evangelize the world in this generation, because of the missionary command of Christ. It seems impossible to explain the final commission of Christ as given in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the Acts, as not implying that each generation of Christians should at least preach

Christ to its own known and accessible world. This was obviously the interpretation placed upon the final commission by the Christians of the first generation.

Every reason for doing the work of evangelization at all, demands that it be done not only thoroughly, but also as speedily as possible. We are responsible for the present generation—for those who are living at the same time with ourselves. The Christians of the past generations could not reach them neither can the Christians of succeeding generations. Obviously each generation of Christians must evangelize its own generation of non-Christians if they are ever to be evangelized. The present generation is one of unexampled crisis in all parts of the unevangelized world. Failure now will make the future task very much more difficult. It is also one of marvelous opportunity. The world is better known and more accessible, its needs more articulate and intelligible, and our ability to go into all the world with the gospel is greater than in any preceding generation. The forces of evil are not deferring their operations to the next generation, but with world-wide enterprise and ceaseless vigor they are seeking to acccomplish their deadly work.

We do not ignore the difficulties in the way of making Christ known to the present generation—difficulties physical, political, social, intellectual, moral, and religious. It is well, however, to be on our guard against the tendency to magnify difficulties unduly and to minimize the providential opportunities, the promises of God, and the resources of the witnesses and ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

It is possible to evangelize the world in this generation. It will help us to realize this possibility if we look at a number of considerations.

It is possible in view of the achievements of the Christians of the first generation. They did more to accomplish the evangelization of the world than has any succeeding generation. Their achievements are remarkable when viewed numerically or when we consider how all classes of society were reached. The persecutions of the first and second centuries, the fierce literary attacks against Christianity and the strong apologies in its defense attest how vigorously the faith of Christ must have been propogated by the first disciples. These achievements seem very remarkable when we remember that at the time of the ascension of Christ the whole number of believers did not exceed a few hundreds. They seem all the more wonderful in the light of the fact that the early Christians had to meet practically every difficulty which confronts the Church today. As we recall the smallness of their number and the difficulties which beset their path and on the other hand remind ourselves not only of our obstacles but also of the marvelous opportunities and resources of the Church today, shall we not agree with Dr. Storrs that the balance of advantage is with us of this generation? In studying the secret of what they accomplished one is led to the conclusion that they employed no vitally important method which can not be used today, and that they availed themselves of no power which we also can not utilize.

It is possible to evangelize the world in this generation in

view of recent missionary achievements of the Church. Note the work oo the Presbyterians in Korea; of the Russians, as well as of some of the Protestant churches in Japan; of the Church Missionary Society, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the American Board in the Fukien Province; of the London Missionary Society in Central China; of the China Inland Mission in the interior provinces of China; of the United Presbyterians of Scotland, and the Irish Presbyterians in Manchuria, of the American Board in the Sandwich Islands, the Wesleyans in the Fiji Islands, and of Dr. Paton in the New Hebrides; of the American Baptists among the Karens, and also among the Telugus; of the Gossner Mission among the Kols during its first twenty years; of the Church Missionary Society, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Southern India; of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Northern India; of the Reformed Church in India, and also in Arabia; of the German Lutherans on the Island of Sumatra; of the London Mission and the Norwegian Lutherans in Madagascar; of the Church Missionary Society in Uganda, the Baptists on the Congo, the Southern Presbyterians at Luebo, and the United Presbyterians in the Nile Valley. Recall the medical work of Dr. Clark at Amritsar, Dr. Kerr at Canton, Dr. Post at Bierut, the Ranaghat Medical Mission in Bengal, the Tientsin Hospital, and of many other medical missionaries in all parts of the wide-world field. Think also of Duff College; the Woman's College at Lucknow; the colleges of the Church Missionary Society and the American Board in Southern India; the Jaffna

College and the Oodooville Girls' School in Ceylon; the True Light Seminary in Canton; the Anglo-Chinese College at Fuchau; Dr. Mateer's College at Tung Chow; the Training Institute at Tung Chow; the early history of the Doshisha; the Women's College at Nagasaki; the Euphrates College, the Syrian Protestant College; the College at Asyut, Egypt, and many others. Nor should we overlook the vital relation which literary work has had and always will have to the evangelization of the world. The patient and thorough work of the hundreds of missionaries who have devoted themselves to the translation of the Scriptures and Christian literature, the ceaseless activity of the scores of mission presses like those at Beirut, Shanghai, and Calcutta, and the wonderful achievements of the Bible Societies in all lands, which have multiplied the power and influence of all other workers and agencies, and sown the seed of the Kingdom far and wide. The most striking example of achievement on the home field in the interest of foreign missions is that of the Moravians. They have done more in proportion to their ability than any other body of Christians. If the members of Protestant churches in Great Britain and America gave in like proportion, their missionary contributions would aggregate over $60,000,000, or a threefold increase. And if they sent out as missionaries in corresponding numbers, we would have a force of nearly 400,000 foreign workers, which is vastly more than the number of missionaries estimated as necessary to achieve the evangelization of the world in a generation. The practical question is, What has there been in connection with the work already ac-

complished which is not reproducible? In view of the extent to which the gospel has already been throughly preached, whether with or without apparent results, by a comparatively small number of workers, it does seem reasonable to expect that by a judicious increase and proper distribution of all missionary agencies which have commended themselves to the Church, an adequate opportunity to know Christ as Saviour and Lord might be given to all people within our day.

It is possible to evangelize the world in this generation in view of the opportunities and resources of the Church and the facilities at her disposal. We must not measure the present ability of the Church by the standards and practice of a Church in the past; only half awake to her duty to the non-Christian world, and under far less favorable conditions for world-wide missionary operations. It hardly seems right to call a thing impossible or impracticable which has not been attempted. Livingston said, "You don't know what you can do until you try." The world-wide proclamation of the gospel awaits accomplishment by a generation which shall have the obedience and determination to attempt the task. For the first time in the history of the Church, practically the whole world is open. We are not justified in saying that there is a single country on the face of the earth where the Church, if she seriously desires, can not send ambassadors of Christ to proclaim His message.

The Church not only has an unexampled opportunity, but also possesses remarkable resources. Think of her membership! There are not less than 135,000,000 members of Pro-

testant Churches. In the British Isles, the United States, and Canada alone, there are over 25,000,000 communicants in evangelical Protestant churches. Contrast these with the few thousands constituting the small, unacknowledged, and despised sect which, on the day of Pentecost, began the evangelization of the then known and accessible world. As we recall the achievements of that infant Church, can we question the ability of the Christians of our day, were they unitedly to resolve to accomplish it, so to distribute within the present generation the gospel messengers and agencies that all mankind might have an opportunity to know Christ, the Saviour and Lord?

We have workers enough to send. It would take less than one-fiftieth of the Christian young men and women who will go out from Christian colleges in the United States and Canada within this generation to furnish a sufficient force of foreign workers to achieve the evangelization of the world in this generation. When we add the Christian students of Britain, the Continent, and Australasia, it will be seen that the Christian countries can well afford to spare the workers. Their going forth will quicken and strengthen, rather than weaken the entire Church.

The money power of the Church is enormous. If only one-fourth of the Protestants of Europe and America give but one cent a day toward the evangelization of the world, it would yield a fund of over $100,000,000 as contrasted with the $19,000,000 given during the past year. Dr. Josiah Strong said, twenty years ago: "There is money enough in the hands of church members to sow every acre of the earth with

the seed of truth—God has intrusted to His children power enough to give the gospel to every creature by the close of this century; but it is being misapplied. Indeed, the world would have been evangelized long ago if Christians had perceived the relation of money to the kingdom, and accepted their stewardship."

With over 500 missionary societies and auxiliaries there are, without doubt, missionary organizations and societies in sufficient number, and possessing sufficient strength and experience to guide an enterprise indefinitely larger than the present missionary operations of the Chruch.

The Bible Societies, not less than eighty in number, have translated the Scriptures entirely or in part into 421 languages and dialects. If this work is properly promoted, before this generation closes each African, each Pacific islander and each inhabitant of Asia will be able to read or hear in his own tongue "the wonderful works of God."

The organized Christian student movements constitute a factor characteristic of this generation. There are fourteen of these national or international student movements, comprising nearly 1,500 Christian Associations with a membership of about 60,000 students and professors. They are seeking to make the universities and colleges strongholds and propagating centers for aggressive Christianity. Out of them has come the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, which has in itself become a great factor in the world's evangelization. It has enrolled thousands of students as volunteers for foreign service. At least 2,000 of them have

already reached the fields. The Church, in possessing this important recruiting and training agency, is equipped as in no preceding age for a world-embracing evangelistic campaign.

The various Christian young people's organizations which have been developed within the past two decades have added tremendously to the power of the Church. In North America alone these movements include fully 6,000,000 young people. These young people themselves if properly educated and guided, are able to give and to raise each year a sum large enough to support all the foreign missionaries who would be required to accomplish the evangelization of the world.

The Sunday Schools constitue a large, undeveloped missionary resource. They contain over 20,000,000 scholars. If these were trained to give two cents per week it would yield an amount greater than the present total missionary gifts of Christendom.

The native Church is the human resource which affords largest promise for the evangelization of the world. It has 1,300,000 communicants and over 4,000,000 adherents. The character and activity of these Christians compares very favorably with that of church members in Christian lands. There are nearly 80,000 native workers, and their number and efficiency are rapidly increasing. There are 1,000,000 children and young people in the various mission schools and institutions. From the ranks of these students and their successors, during the next few years, are to come the hundreds of thousands of evangelists, Bible women, and other workers who will be needed to preach Christ to the unevangelized world.

This emphasizes the importance of the Student Young Men's Christian Association movement in mission lands. In uniting the native Christian students, first, to lead their fellow-students to Christ, and then, after their preparation is completed, to go forth to evangelize their own countrymen, it is doing much to solve the problem of the world's speedy and thorough evangelization.

In considering the Church's present power of achievement, we should take account not only of her resources, but also of the facilities at her disposal. Among these should be mentioned the work of the eighty-three Geographical Societies, which, through the investigations which they have encouraged, have done so much to make the whole world known.

Another help to the Church today, is the intimate knowledge which she now possesses of the social, moral, and spiritual condition and need of all races of mankind.

The greatly enlarged and improved means of communication constitutes one of the chief facilities of which the Church of this generation can avail herself. Of the 400,000 miles of railway lines in the world a considerable and growing mileage is already to be found in non-Christian lands. It is possible, for example, to go by rail to all parts of India and Japan. The greatest railway enterprises of the time are those now building or projected in non-Christian lands. When even a part of these materialize, as they will within a few years, more than one-third of the unevangelized world will be made much more accessible to missionaries. It took Judson eleven months to go from Salem to Calcutta. The trip can now be made

in a month. Moffat was three months on the way from England to the Cape. Now the voyage lasts but two weeks. These developments mean an immense saving in time to the missionary force. The 170,000 miles of submarine cables which have cost at least $250,000,000, are also of great service to the missionary societies. They help the Church not only by promoting general intelligence, but also in facilitating the financial transactions and administrative work of missions. The thoroughly organized news agencies which, through the secular press, bring before the members of the Church facts regarding the most distant and needy nations, serve indirectly to awaken and foster interests in the inhabitants of less favored lands. The Universal Postal Union with its wonderful organization and its vast army of well-nigh 1,000,000 employees, immensely facilitates the work of foreign missions. Within a few years, doubtless, it will include within its sphere of action practically all of those unevangelized parts of the world which have not already been brought within its reach. As a result of all these means of communication the world has become very small. They have, as it were, united the separate continents into one great nation. They have made the most remote parts of the inhabited world easily accessible. Ramsay points out that "There are no stronger influences in education and administration than rapidity and ease of traveling, and the postal service. Paul, both by precept and example, impressed the importance of both on his churches."

The printing press has greatly multiplied the power of the Church to disseminate Christian truth. At the beginning of this

century printing was done on hand presses, and only from one to two hundred impressions could be taken in an hour. Now there are presses which print, bind, and fold 100,000 papers in an hour. The linotype and many other improvements in printing have, to a remarkable degree, reduced the price of books. In past generations Bibles were expensive. Carey's first Bible sold at $20. A Bengali Bible can now be purchased for a few cents. So there is no mechanical difficulty in the way of giving the Bible to every family under heaven. The influence and protection of Christian governments is a decided help to missions. In no age could ambassadors of Christ carry on their work with such safety. Over one-third of the population of the unevangelized world are under the direct sway of Christian rulers. Moreover, the Protestant powers are in a position to exert an influence which will make possible the free preaching of the gospel to the remaining two-thirds of the people, who have not heard of Christ.

Why has God made the whole world known and accessible to our generation. Why has He provided us with such wonderful agencies? Not that the forces of evil might utilize them. Not that they be wasted or unused. Such vast preparations must have been made to further some mighty and beneficient purpose. Every one of these wonderful facilities has been intended primarily to serve as a handmaid to the sublime enterprise of extending and building up the kingdom of Jesus Christ in all the world. The hand of God, in opening door after door among the nations, and in bringing to light invention after invention, is beckoning the Church of our day to larger achievements.

The undertakings and achievements in the realm of secular and non-Christian enterprise should stimulate us to believe that it is possible for the Church to evangelize the world in its generation. Gold was discovered in the Klondike, and within a little over a year it is said that over 100,000 men started over the difficult passes, at great risk and cost of life, to possess themselves of the riches of that region. Stanley wanted some twenty or thirty English helpers to accompany him on his last great African journey of exploration. He advertised the fact, and within a few days over 1,200 men responded, eager to face the deadly climate and other great perils involved in the expedition. It is reported that in the last Presidential campaign one of the two great political parties, within a few weeks, placed two documents on the money question in the hands of practically every voter in the whole land. At the present time this country has about 50,000 soldiers in the Philippine Islands. This is not considered an extravagant number for the country to send to the ends of the earth to accomplish her purpose. It is noticeable that when the regiments return to the homeland they receive one continuous ovation from the time they enter the Golden Gate until they reach their homes. There are now probably 200,000 soldiers in the British forces at the Cape. We have seen Canada send off contingent after contingent with cheers and with prayers. Similar scenes have taken place in the colonies of Australia and New Zealand. We have all been impressed by this exhibition of the unity, loyalty, and power of the British Empire. We have also been deeply moved by the

example of the African republics, as we have seen not only the young men, but also the old men and boys going out to fight the battles of their country. It is looked upon as a matter of course that both of the contending parties should pour out without stint, the lives and substance of their people. And yet, when it is suggested that all Protestant Christendom unite in sending out 50,000 missionaries, more or less,—it is impracticable and visionary. It would be too severe a strain on the resources of the Church. The naval budgets of at least three countries are from three to five times as great as the sum required to sustain the present missionary forces of the Church. The Mormon Church numbers only 250,000 but it has 1,700 missionaries at work in different parts of this and other lands. If they need more, it is said that their system would enable them to send out between 7,000 and 8,000. The little island of Ceylon has sent out multitudes of Buddhist missionaries to all parts of Asia. In the University of El Azhar, in Cairo, we found over 8,000 Mohammedan students coming from countries as widely separated as Morocco, the western provinces of China, and the East India islands. They were being prepared to go out as missionaries of the false Prophet. No human, secular, or non-Christian undertaking should surpass in enterprise, devotion, and aggressiveness the Church of Jesus Christ. Because of the magnitude of the task to which God has called us, because of the impending crisis and the urgency of the situation in all parts of the non-Christian world, because of the dangers of anything else than a great onward movement, because of the

constraining memories of the cross of Christ, and the love wherewith He loved us, has not the generation come for the Church to put forth her strength and evangelize the whole world?

Notwithstanding the considerations upon which we have been dwelling, there are here and there to be found those who speak of the idea of the evangelization of the world in this generation as fantastic and visionary. And yet was it not Gordon Hall and Samuel Newell, who, in 1818, issued an appeal to Christians to evangelize the world in this generation? Did not the missionaries of the Sandwich Islands, in 1836, unite in a most impressive appeal to the Chruch to preach the gospel to every creature within their generation? Did not the Shanghai Missionary Conference of 1877 express its desire to have China emancipated from the thraldom of sin in this generation, and its belief that it might be done? An increasing number of the most eminent and experienced missionaries of the world have expressed their strong belief in the possibility of the realization of this watchword. Secretaries of several of the leading mission boards of America and England have indorsed the idea without reservation. Editors, including that thorough missionary student, Dr. Robson of Scotland, have spoken of its reasonableness. The bishops of the Anglican Communion, at the last Lambeth Conference, expressed their gratification at the student missionary uprising which had taken as its watchword the evangelization of the world in this generation. Early in January of this year at the great student convention in London, Alexander MacKennal, president of

the Free Church Council, said, regarding the evangelization of the world in this generation, when the idea was put before him, "I felt first the audacity of the proposal, then the reasonableness of the proposal, and lastly that the confidence of young men and women would carry it into effect, I was sure. It seemed to me that the very finger of God was pointing the way, and the Spirit of God inspiring the endeavor." At the same convention the Archbishop of Canterbury said that "It is not an inconceivable thing that, as God has within the last generation opened the way, so within the present generation He may crown His works." It seems as if we who are now living, the young men among us who are now joining this very union, those who are now studying the great task to which the Lord has called them, shall, before they die, be able to say: "The whole race of mankind is not yet Christian, but, nevertheless, there is no nation upon earth where the Christian faith is not taught if men will accept it; there is no place upon the whole surface of the globe where man may not hear the message of God and the story of the cross." It is significant that during this great Ecumenical Conference it has not been the young men chiefly, but the veterans of the cross who have exhorted us to larger achievement. Was it not Bishop Thoburn who said that if this Conference and those whom it represents will do their duty, within the first decade of the new century ten millions of souls might be gathered into the Church of Christ? Was it not Dr. Ashmore who expressed the belief that before the twentieth century closes Christianity would be the dominant religion among the multitudin-

ous inhabitants of the Chinese Empire? And was it not Dr. Chamberlain who affirmed the possibility of bringing India under the sway of Christ within the lifetime of some at least, in this assembly? If these great leaders are thus sanguine of victory, should those of us who are at home hesitate?

Let us not forget that the evangelization of the world is God's enterprise. Jesus Christ is its leader. He who is the same yesterday, today, yea, and forever, abides in those who go forth to preach Him. The Holy Spirit is able to shake whole communities. The Word of God is quick and powerful. Prayer can remove mountains. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

The price of this pamphlet is 5c. per copy, 40c. per dozen, $2.50 per hundred, express charges prepaid.